



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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FIRST FEDERAL WILDLIFE REFUGE IN KANSAS IS ESTABLISHED

The first Federal wildlife refuge in Kansas was officially created today when Assistant Secretary of the Interior Fred G. Aandahl signed a formal "notice of establishment."

Known as the Kirwin National Wildlife Management Area, the new refuge is superimposed on lands acquired by the Bureau of Reclamation for the impoundment of waters in connection with the Kirwin Irrigation Project in Phillips County in the west-central part of Kansas. The area is situated in a shallow valley and contains approximately 10,800 acres of land and water.

Under the provisions of a Cooperative Agreement signed last year, the Bureau of Reclamation has turned the area over to the Fish and Wildlife Service for wildlife management purposes, with the Service assuming responsibility for the development of the recreational aspects of the area. Access roads, parking facilities, and picnic areas with tables, fireplaces, and comfort stations will be provided. Permits will be granted for boat rentals and the sale of bait to fishermen. Camping and trailer parking will be permitted. Fish and Wildlife Service representatives will cooperate with citizens of the area in developing future plans for wider recreational uses as the need arises.

For waterfowl use, the Kirwin management area is strategically located in the Central Flyway, lying between the refuge areas of western Nebraska and the famous Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge of north-central Oklahoma. Both ducks and geese will utilize the area, although management for geese will be of primary importance because of the critical habitat situation for these birds in the Central Flyway. Given time to establish waterfowl use, especially geese, Service officials predict that the Kirwin vicinity can become one of the best waterfowl shooting sections of Kansas.

The establishment of the Kirwin National Wildlife Management Area is in keeping with the multiple-use concept being applied to projects of the Department of the Interior. In this case, wildlife management can be coordinated with recreational use.

It is planned that a part of the reservoir area will be opened to public shooting, although this may not be possible for three or four years until the goose population has been built up. Public shooting will be administered by the Kansas Forestry, Fish and Game Commission.

The Reservoir will also be open to public fishing in accordance with State laws and regulations.

The Fish and Wildlife Service now administers 272 national wildlife refuges in continental United States, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and Alaska. These sanctuaries cover an aggregate of approximately 17,409,968 acres where migratory waterfowl, rare wildlife species, and other wild creatures are protected from depletion of numbers and species extinction.

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